

Barton Academy
Mobile, Alabama

Mobile Co.

ALA
HABS No. 16-32

HABS
ALA,
49-MOBI,
34-

PHOTOGRAPHS

District No. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

BARTON ACADEMY
Government Street, between Lawrence & Cedar.
Mobile, Mobile County, Alabama.

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Ownership:

Present Owner: Board of School Commissioners.
Mobile County, Alabama.
Previous Owners: " " "

Present Occupants: Grammar grades, offices of
School Board, Superintendent,
and ect.,

Date of Erection: 1835.

Architect: Thomas Simmons James.

Builder: Not definitely known.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: Three.

Materials of Construction: Brick, smooth stucco and white
washed. Tin roofs. Wood dome and cupola. Wrought iron balcony
rails. Exterior trim painted dark green.

Other Existing Records:

Compiled by: Katherine Floyd, Auburn, Ala.
Glennita Broach, Mobile, Ala.

Approved: E. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer, HABS
9/2/1936

T.T.W. 6/14/37

ALA
49-Mobi
34-

Additional Data: Willoughby Barton, for whom this school is named, was a representative, from Mobile, in the state legislature. On January 10, 1826, he drew and had passed, an act creating a Board of School Commissioners for Mobile County, with power to establish schools and carry out plans for education. The principal revenue was to be a quarter of the ordinary county tax, all the fine and forfeiture funds and some licensss. Among the first of these Commissioners was Henry Hitchcock, prominent and public-spirited citizen.

The square enclosed by Government, Cedar, Conti and Lawrence Streets was bought in 1830 for twenty seven hundred and fifty dollars. It must have been about this time that Henry Hitchcock, was active raising money for this building, for much of this was due to his efforts.

Erection of the original building started in 1835, but revenues were evidently insufficient, for an act of 1836 enabled the commissioners to raise funds for its completion by means of a lottery, County schools were authorized at this time.

Private and denominational schools of the city were held in the building and appropriations were made for them by the commissioners. An act of the legislature in 1846 granted for taxes to be applied to the free Methodist School. As a further means of - revenue parts of the building were rented for society and lodging rooms. About 1851 the Board of School Commissioners revised the plan and asked for authority to sell the building; the interest from the proceeds to be applied to the fund to be distributed among the schools. An act of February 9, 1852 authorized this sale provided it was approved by an election of the people. This approval was rejected by a majority of ten to one, a new board was elected, the building was altered and repaired, and the system was reorganized and opened as a public school November, 1852. While nominal tuition fees were charged at this time it has for many years past, been operated under the approved systems of the day, serving the primary, grammar grades and high schools.

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Additional Data: (cont'd)

Three diplomas were conferred in 1859. Interrupted during the war between the states the Girls High School reopened in 1865, the Boys High School in 1870 and both continued from that time to 1926 when a new high school was built.

With the growth of population the building was supplemented by two additional buildings on the same property which were demolished and replaced by the J. D. Yerby High School in 1904. About 1899 Barton Academy was enlarged by the addition of the east and the west wings, additions were made in the rear in 1915, and very material changes have been made in modernizing the interior of the original building.

The high old lance-type wrought iron fence, surmounting a low brick and stone capped coping, which incloses the entire square, and the massive iron gate posts of the front entrance, preserving the original aspect, are in keeping with the sturdy character of this building.

Water Color:

"The Gates of Barton Academy." Water color, painted by Edmond G. deCelle. 1932.

"The Gates of Barton Academy." / Oil color, by Edmond G. deCelle PWA, Now in Washington, D. C. 1934.

Source of Material: "Mobile of the Five Flags"

By P. J. Hamilton
Mobiles Public Library
Mobile, Alabama.

Mrs. Brown. School Offices
Barton Academy,
Mobile, Alabama.

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167 N. LaFayette St.
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